

Dear Ally in Peace,

Many of you, in the past, have joined Veterans for Peace, in the ringing of bells on or near November 11, originally called Armistice Day. For nearly 25 years we have held ceremonies in cities across the country. In 2012, ceremonies were held in over 60 cities, celebrating the joy felt around the world when the World War I Armistice was signed the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month of 1918, to honor the end of a war considered so horrendous that people prayed it must never happen again. Yet it continues.

As was done back then for many years, especially by churches, we ring the bell 11 times at 11 a.m., November 11, followed by a moment of silence for the many soldiers and civilians killed and injured in warfare, and with a commitment to find our own means to work for peace in our environment. During the last several years, many churches have joined us, making their own ceremony, even if only for a few minutes during a regular service. Last year, with the help of several organizations, this remembrance happened in approximately 60 cities throughout the U.S. on or around November 11.

If you choose to join us again, or for the first time, whether with a hand-bell or your church's tower bell, please read this statement aloud and print it in your bulletin:

“The Armistice of 1918 ended the terrible slaughter of World War I. The U.S. alone had experienced the death of over 116,000 soldiers, plus many more who were physically and mentally disabled. For one moment, at the 11th hour of the 11th day of the 11th month, the world agreed World War I must be considered the WAR TO END ALL WARS. There was exuberant joy everywhere, and many churches rang their bells, some 11 times at 11 a.m. November 11, when the Armistice was signed. For many years this practice endured, and then slowly, it faded away. Now we do it again. We ring the bells 11 times, with a moment of silence, to remember the many soldiers and civilians killed and injured by warfare, and to make our own commitment to work for peace, in our family, our church, our community, our nation, our world. GOD BLESS THE ENTIRE WORLD.”

We also invite you at any time to consider speakers from Veterans for Peace, many of them members of local spiritual communities, and all of them coming from a depth of spirituality caused by being asked to face what is most terrible in the human condition, and emerging from that with a solid conviction that war cannot possibly be the plan of the Creator of the Universe.

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